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Internet 'fair' hopes to hook Japanese

MAKUHARI, Chiba Pref. — Japan has confirmed its participation in the Internet 1996 World Exposition, an international on-line fair slated to begin a one-year run in January.

The Internet is a web of computer networks and users providing information to about 50 million people around the world, and the fair is a special promotion intended to bring more people onto the infobahn.

A panel of experts and orga-

nizers said the event will boost expansion of the Internet in Japan.

Dubbed the father of the Japanese Internet, Jun Murai, a computer science professor at Keio University, was appointed earlier this month as chairman of several committees that are to create a "Japanese pavilion."

"I have been trying for a decade to build up a network of Internet facilities in this country," Murai said, "but met with very critical response. The Internet in this country suffers from what I call the Tupperware syndrome. People will only get interested if they have used it."

He added that Japanese are skeptical of the network's possibilities and called the World Exposition an excellent opportunity to prove the Internet's worth.

About 200 Japanese households will get a free connection to the Internet throughout 1996 as a way of "shedding light on the future potential of FTTH (fiber-to-the-home)," the organizers said.

The pavilions that will participate in the exposition will offer a wide variety of information.

One can link up, for example, to a Dutch dairy farm via the Global Cow Pavilion, or check a menu at a fancy New York restaurant in the Food

and Condiments pavilion.

Information from large government data bases will be available in the Reinventing Government pavilion, and in the Global Schoolhouse pavilion, schools can review research on the environment or other fields of interest.

Businesses are required to pay a \$200,000 fee to participate, while nonprofit organizations and individuals will not be not charged to set up their own pavilion on any subject.

In Japan, such organizations as Huis Ten Bosch, a theme park in Nagasaki, and Keio University, plan to take part.